

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 17th December, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor R Charlwood in the Chair

Councillors K Bruce, N Buckley, R Downes,
J Dunn, B Gettings, T Hanley, M Harland,
G Hussain, G Hyde, A Khan, P Latty,
B Selby and C Townsley

75 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents

76 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items identified where the press or public would be required to be excluded from the meeting due to the nature of business to be considered

77 Late Items

There were no late items

78 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

79 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Wilkinson

80 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th November 2013 were accepted as a true and correct record.

81 Review of Private Hire Operator (PHO) Conditions

The Head of Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of a comprehensive review of the Private Hire Operator conditions (PHO). The review would seek to introduce proposals that will contribute to an uplift of service standards and compliance across the operator licensing base and meet arising public safety challenges.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for information / comment

- The existing Private Hire Operator Conditions (Appendix 1 refers)

- The allocation of licensed Private Hire Vehicles (Appendix 2 refers)
- Consultation and engagement (Appendix 3 refers)

Des Broster, Section Head, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, presented the report and responded to Members questions and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report particularly the proposals for consultation on the new Private Hire Operator conditions with specific reference to the following:

- The introduction of more formalised training
- Public complaints and how they are dealt with
- Record of bookings
- Lost property
- Out of Town Hackney Carriages acting as Private Hire Vehicles in this licensing district
- Schedule of drivers

In offering comment Councillor Dunn welcomed the report but highlighted the importance of the trade to engage with each other.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That a three month consultation period be undertaken enabling wider contact with disability groups and partner agencies in respect of the broader issues
- (ii) That in respect of the issue concerning “out of town” Hackney Carriage Vehicles initial consultation be for a one month period with a review period of six months following implementation

82 Introduction of three yearly Disclosure and Barring Service checks on Hackney carriage drivers, private hire drivers, Hackney carriage proprietors and private hire operators

The Head of Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of a proposal to introduce a three yearly Disclosure and Barring Service checks on Hackney Carriage Drivers, Private Hire Drivers, Hackney Carriage Proprietors and Private Hire Operators. The report highlighted the potential impact upon licence holders and resource implications for the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section.

Des Broster, Section Head, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, presented the report and responded to Members questions and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- The potential impact on licence holders
- The resource implications for the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section

In offering comment Councillor Bruce welcomed the proposal suggesting that the public needed to be assured that the necessary checks had been undertaken.

Referring to paragraph 3.8 of the submitted report and the indication that additional staffing would be required to undertake the administration processes, the Chair asked if temporary staff could be employed?

In responding Mr Broster said it was unlikely that there'd be any advantage to employing temporary staff, the intention was to keep the situation under review and assign resources accordingly.

In summing up the Chair welcome the report suggesting Members appeared to be supportive of the proposals

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To approve the introduction of three yearly disclosures on all existing licence holders noting that minor administrative changes may be made, as the policy develops
- (iii) To approve that a DBS check is a pre-requisite to the grant of a Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Driver, Hackney Carriage Proprietor and Private Hire Operator licence

83 Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of Licensing Policy 2014-18

The Head of Licensing and Registration submitted a report which provided the Consultation Report and the Final Statement of Licensing Policy 2014 – 2018 for consideration and review.

Susan Holden, Principal Project Officer, Entertainment Licensing, presented the report and responded to Members questions and queries.

It was reported that 10 responses had been received as a result of the consultation exercise and changes had been made to the Policy as a consequence.

The issues where comments had been received included:

- Alcohol deliveries by fast food outlets and specifically about the protection of children
- Temporary Event Notices
- Cumulative Impact Policies

In offering comment Councillor Dunn suggested that it was disappointing that some Parish Council's had chosen not to comment, for example; establishing their own Policies in certain areas of the city

In summing up the Chair welcomed the report and thanked Members of the Working Group for their efforts.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the responses to the public consultation
- (ii) To accept the Consultation Report and the amended Statement of Licensing Policy
- (iii) That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2014 - 2018 and the Consultation Report be referred to Council for final approval

84 Strong Alcohol Schemes

The Head of Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of the progress being made in other Local Authority areas with a voluntary scheme, which work with business to remove high strength, low cost alcohol from sale in areas which are experiencing incidents of alcohol related antisocial behaviour.

Susan Holden, Principal Project Officer, Entertainment Licensing, presented the report and responded to Members questions and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- The outcome of similar initiatives undertaken by other Local Authorities
- The implications to consumers, as a result excessive consumption of strong alcohol: Health problems, anti-social behaviour, various types of crime and community issues
- Local actions taken by the Police
- Local Alcohol Action Areas

Councillor Selby welcomed the report and in offering comment said it was interesting to see what other local authorities were doing about this issue. He also suggested that the report be referred to the Area Committees to obtain their views on designing a similar scheme for Leeds.

Referring to “street drinkers” Sergeant Shaw, West Yorkshire Police said that Officers on the street had made positive progress in simply talking to people about the possible consequences of excessive consumption of strong alcohol. He also reported that an initiative convincing shops and supermarkets to avoid selling alcohol in single cans had also been seen as a success.

Councillor Hyde said that Members had a good relationship with St Anne’s Shelter and could they be included within the consultation process.

In responding John Kearsley, Chief Officer, Elections, Licensing and Registration said that Officers had recently met with representatives from St Georges Crypt to seek their views on the proposal and a similar meeting would be held with St Anne’s Shelter.

Other suggestions as to who should be included in the consultation were: Street Homeless, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Home Safety Team, Domestic Violence Unit and the Health Authority

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted and welcomed
- (ii) That Officers' be instructed to commence discussions with partners on designing a similar scheme for Leeds to those operating in other UK cities.
- (iii) That the report be referred to all Area Committees to obtain their views on designing a similar scheme in Leeds
- (iv) That a further report providing proposals for the operation of the scheme in Leeds be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee

85 Licensing Work Programme

RESOLVED – That, subject to the inclusion of any additional item of business identified at this meeting, the contents of the Licensing Work Programme be noted

86 Date and time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 14th January 2014 at 10.00am in the Civic Hall, Leeds.